

In the Claims

1. (withdrawn) A thermal preservation insert for inserting into a plastic food container, said plastic food container including a bottom and a container wall, said container wall having a lower portion that meets the bottom, the thermal preservation insert comprising:

a flat disk, the flat disk containing a thermal preservation fluid completely buried inside the disk,

the disk having a lower surface that conforms to a shape of the bottom of the plastic food container,

the disk having a substantially flat upper surface, and

the disk having a side that conforms to a shape of the lower portion of the container wall of the plastic food container.

2. (withdrawn) The insert of claim 1, wherein the upper surface of the disk is substantially smooth.

3. (withdrawn) The insert of claim 2, wherein the upper surface of the disk has a plastic tab jutting out

4. (withdrawn) A thermal preservation insert for inserting into a plastic food container, said plastic food container including a bottom and a sloping container wall, an interior space defined by said sloping container wall narrowing toward the bottom, said plastic food container having a lower portion that meets the bottom, the thermal preservation insert comprising:

a flat disk, the flat disk containing a thermal preservation fluid completely buried inside the disk,

the disk having a lower surface that conforms to a shape of the bottom of the plastic food container,

the disk having a substantially flat upper surface,

the disk having a side that conforms to the lower portion of the sloping container wall of the plastic food container, and

the flat disk capable of being inserted into the plastic food container so as to rest on an intermediate portion of the sloping container wall of the plastic food container.

5. (withdrawn) The insert of claim 4, wherein the upper surface of the disk is substantially smooth.

6. (withdrawn) The insert of claim 5, wherein the upper surface of the disk has a plastic tab jutting out.

7. (withdrawn) A thermal preservation insert for inserting into a plastic food container, said plastic food container including a bottom and a container wall, said container wall having a ridge and a lower portion that meets the bottom, the thermal preservation insert comprising:

a flat disk, the flat disk containing a thermal preservation fluid completely buried inside the disk,

the disk having a lower surface that conforms to a shape of the bottom of the plastic food container,

the disk having a substantially flat upper surface, and

the disk having a side that conforms to a shape of the lower portion of the container wall of the plastic food container and having a width that conforms to a width of the container wall just above the ridge.

8. (withdrawn) The insert of claim 7, wherein the upper surface of the disk is substantially smooth.

9. (withdrawn) The insert of claim 8, wherein the upper surface of the disk has a plastic tab jutting out.

10. (withdrawn) A thermal preservation insert for inserting into a plastic food container, said plastic food container including a bottom and a sloping container wall, an interior space defined by said sloping container wall narrowing toward the bottom, said sloping wall having a ridge in an intermediate portion thereof, said plastic food container having a lower portion that meets the bottom, the thermal preservation insert comprising:

a flat disk, the flat disk containing a thermal preservation fluid completely buried inside the disk,

the disk having a lower surface that conforms to a shape of the bottom of the plastic food container,

the disk having a substantially flat upper surface,

the disk having a side that conforms to the lower portion of the sloping container wall of the plastic food container, and

the flat disk capable of being inserted into the plastic food container so as to rest on an intermediate portion of the sloping container wall of the plastic food container just above the ridge.

11. (withdrawn) The insert of claim 10, wherein the upper surface of the disk is substantially smooth.

12. (withdrawn) The insert of claim 11, wherein the upper surface of the disk has a plastic tab jutting out.

13. (currently amended) A combination of a thermal preservation insert and a plastic food container, comprising:

a plastic food container including a bottom and a container wall, said container wall having a lower portion that meets the bottom,

a thermal preservation insert comprising:

a disk, the disk containing a thermal preservation fluid completely buried inside the disk,

the disk having a lower surface that conforms to a shape of the bottom of the plastic food container; and ~~the disk~~ having a side that conforms to a shape of the lower portion of the container wall of the plastic food container, the lower surface of the disk resting on the bottom of the plastic food container and the side of the disk resting snugly against the lower portion of the container wall thereby precluding food from penetrating between surfaces of the plastic food container and the disk, said disk not fastened to a part of the plastic container.

14. (original) The combination of claim 13, wherein the disk has a substantially flat upper surface.

15. (currently amended) The combination of claim 14, wherein the upper surface of the disk is substantially smooth and is in direct contact with food.

16. (previously presented) The combination of claim 13, wherein the upper surface of the disk has a plastic tab jutting out.

17. (withdrawn) A combination of a plastic food container with a thermal preservation insert, comprising:

a plastic food container including a bottom and a sloping container wall, an interior space defined by said sloping container wall narrowing toward the bottom, said plastic food container having a lower portion that meets the bottom,

a thermal preservation insert comprising:

a disk, the disk containing a thermal preservation fluid completely buried inside the disk,

the disk having a lower surface that conforms to a shape of the bottom of the plastic food container,

the disk having a side that conforms to an intermediate portion of the sloping container wall of the plastic food container,

,the disk resting on the bottom of the plastic food container, said disk not fastened

to a part of the plastic container,

the disk capable of being repositioned in the plastic food container so as to rest on the intermediate portion of the sloping container wall of the plastic food container without being fastened to a part of the plastic container.

18. (withdrawn) The combination of claim 17, wherein the disk has a substantially flat upper surface.

19. (withdrawn) The combination of claim 18, wherein the upper surface of the disk is substantially smooth.

20. (withdrawn) The combination of claim 17, wherein the upper surface of the disk has a plastic tab jutting out.

21. (currently amended) A combination of a plastic food container with two thermal preservation inserts, comprising:

a plastic food container including a bottom and a sloping container wall, an interior space defined by said sloping container wall narrowing toward the bottom, said plastic food container having a lower portion that meets the bottom,

a first thermal preservation insert placed on the bottom of the plastic food container and comprising:

a disk, the disk containing a thermal preservation fluid completely buried inside the disk,

the disk having a lower surface that conforms to a shape of the bottom of the plastic food container, ~~the disk~~ and having a side that conforms to the lower portion of the sloping container wall of the plastic food container, and

a second thermal preservation insert comprising a second disk containing a thermal preservation fluid completely buried inside the second disk, a side of the second disk conforming to an intermediate portion of the sloping container wall of the plastic food container when the second thermal preservation insert rests on the intermediate portion of the sloping container wall of the plastic food container,

the lower surface of the disk resting on the bottom of the plastic food container and the side of the disk resting snugly against the lower portion of the container wall thereby precluding food from penetrating between surfaces of the plastic food container and the disk, said disk not fastened to a part of the plastic container.

22. (original) The combination of claim 21, wherein the disk has a substantially flat upper surface.

23. (original) The combination of claim 22, wherein the upper surface of the disk is substantially smooth.

24. (previously presented) The combination of claim 21, wherein the upper surface of the disk has a plastic tab jutting out.

25. (withdrawn) The combination of claim 13, wherein the plastic food container is of a

size and shape sold under a brand name Tupperware®, a brand name Glad® or a brand name Ziplock®.

26. (withdrawn) The combination of claim 25, wherein an upper surface of the disk conforms to a shape of the lower surface of an identical disk for stacking purposes during storage.

27. (withdrawn) The combination of claim 17, wherein the plastic food container is of a size and shape sold under a brand name Tupperware®, a brand name Glad® or a brand name Ziplock®.

28. (withdrawn) The combination of claim 27, wherein an upper surface of the disk conforms to a shape of the lower surface of an identical disk for stacking purposes during storage.

29. (withdrawn) The combination of claim 21, wherein the plastic food container is of a size and shape sold under a brand name Tupperware®, a brand name Glad® or a brand name Ziplock®.

30. (withdrawn) The combination of claim 29, wherein an upper surface of the disk conforms to a shape of the lower surface of an identical disk for stacking purposes during storage.

31. (not entered) A combination of a thermal preservation insert and a plastic food container, comprising:

a multi-compartment plastic food container, each compartment including a bottom and a compartment container wall, said compartment container wall having a lower portion that meets the bottom,

a thermal preservation insert for each compartment, each thermal preservation insert comprising:

a disk, the disk containing a thermal preservation fluid completely buried inside the disk,

the disk having a lower surface that conforms to a shape of the bottom of the plastic food container, and

the disk having a side that conforms to a shape of the lower portion of the container wall of the plastic food container, the disk resting on the bottom of the compartment of the plastic food container, said disk not fastened to a part of the plastic food container.

32. (currently amended) A method of preparing a plastic food container so that it can store food in a thermally controlled way, comprising:

(a) providing a plastic food container, said plastic food container including a bottom and a container wall, said plastic food container wall having a lower portion that meets the bottom,

(b) providing a thermal preservation insert, the insert comprising:

a disk, the disk containing a thermal preservation fluid completely buried inside the disk,

the disk having a lower surface that conforms to a shape of the bottom of the

plastic food container, and ~~the disk~~ having a side that conforms to a shape of the lower portion of the container wall of the plastic food container

(c) placing the thermal preservation insert inside the plastic food container so that the lower surface of the disk rests on the bottom of the plastic food container, so that the side of the disk rests snugly against the lower portion of the container wall thereby precluding food from penetrating between surfaces of the plastic food container and the disk and so that the disk is not fastened to a part of the plastic food container.

33. (withdrawn) The method of claim 32, wherein providing a plastic food container means providing a plastic food container of a size and shape sold under a brand name Tupperware®, a brand name Glad® or a brand name Ziplock®.

34. (previously presented) The method of claim 32, wherein providing a thermal preservation insert means providing a thermal preservation insert that has a tab on an upper surface of the disk.

35. (previously presented) The method of claim 32, wherein providing a thermal preservation insert comprising a disk means providing such an insert comprising a disk wherein an upper surface of the disk conforms to a shape of the lower surface of an identical disk for stacking purposes during storage.

36. (withdrawn) The method of claim 35, wherein providing a plastic food container means providing a plastic food container of a size and shape sold under a brand name

Tupperware®, a brand name Glad® or a brand name Ziplock®.

37. (previously presented) The method of claim 35, wherein providing a thermal preservation insert means providing a thermal preservation insert that has a tab on an upper surface of the disk.

38. (new) The combination of claim 13, wherein the thermal preservation fluid is inaccessible.

39. (new) The combination of claim 14, wherein the thermal preservation fluid is inaccessible.

40. (new) The combination of claim 15, wherein the thermal preservation fluid is inaccessible.

Description

Please insert the following paragraph on page 14 as the next to the last paragraph of the "Detailed Description of the Drawings and Preferred Embodiment":

--As used herein, the term "disk" is used in a special way as described in the Specification and illustrated in the drawings. Thus, "disk" 20 need not be round.--